T Y 796 276

If some boys wanted to take jimsonweed, they would announce the fact in early winter (about December), and then abstain from meat and grease for the next two months. During this period they remained quietly about home, neither hunting, playing, nor participating in social affairs. About two weeks before the drinking, a doctor would retire with the boys to a private camp, where he instructed them in deportment, how to address jimsonweed when praying. Boys who participated were about sixteen and, according to F.M., were expected to remain continent for about three years. The retreat lasted two or three days, and on emerging, they set the day for the drinking twelve days in advance.

T Y [833]

Each boy had a sponsor whose duty it was to prepare the drink for him. These were men who "knew how to do it and had taken jimsonweed themselves." When one was digging up jimsonweed, a prayer was made, and eagle down would be sprinkled on the plant in order to obtain a large root. The size of the root does not correspond at all to the size of the plant, or the ground might be hard, or stones might interfere: the prayer and down obviated all these uncertainties. A man always went to the same spot to obtain the roots. The roots were mashed, added to water, and boiled a little.

The boys and spectators gathered in the early morning. Each boy was provided with a large coiled basket which held about one to two quarts. The basket was made by the boy's mother or, if necessary, bought, as it had to be of fine workmanship. It was received as a gift-payment by the sponsor, and after the ceremony could be used for any purpose. The sponsor held the basket to the boy's lips; the boy must not touch it; he must finish it all at one draught.[134]

T Y [285 431]

A man who was in charge of the ceremony made one prayer for all the participants. Neither F.M. nor S.G., the interpreter, could state what this was, save that he "called on Sun, Eagle, Cougar, and all those big ones" to give the drinkers good life and protection. Meanwhile several good runners and a "loud shouter" were assembled, and these, with the shouter leading, and the drinkers ran three times around a specified circuit. If a drinker fell before the laps were completed, his life would be shortened by so much.

When the drinkers became unconscious they were laid on deerskins or tule mats with a woman at the head and feet of each. By evening the coma began to wear off, and the women sang songs to rouse the boys. Toward morning they became voluble and made their revelations: people assembled to watch and listen. The drinkers could see people who were far away, and could see, too, who was traveling. They

[134] Although the basket might hold as much as 2 quarts, the amount drunk was not specified by F.M.